1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukan

WARFARE

There is no record in Pukapuka of pitched battles between opposing groups, or of warfare existing within the social structure of a definite institution. The atoll was too small, the total population too few, and the amount of available land too little for institutional warfare to have developed. Informants definitely asserted that warfare was unknown on Pukapuka. They were correct in one sense, but the existence of weapons and stories about fighting shows that the island was not always at peace. Fighting incidents in stories of the fighting at Waletoa (p. 389), the fighting against Yangalipule *po* (1), the fighting of Tuiva against the men of Yatō (p. 395), the fighting against Uyo (1), and the fighting of Te Nana in Yayake (p. 403) reveal that such fighting was caused by violation of the tapu of the reserves, quarrels over food divisions, personal rivalries, quarrels over division of the reserves, and like matters. The fighting that occurred rarely rose above the level of brawling, but where a pitched hand-to-hand contest resulted, much blood seems to have been shed for little cause. The number of deaths in these contests seems to have been increased by the fact that losers habitually committed suicide by having relatives bury them alive.

The following customs relate to fighting:

At a meeting for the discussion of highly controversial matters, a net of *welo* bark was hung on the beach nearby as a warning to all to keep the peace. Anyone wishing for violence had to declare his intentions by tearing down the net, which not only provoked secular violence from opponents but also punishment from the gods for violating the tapu of the net.

A man prepared for fighting by tying up his long hair and girding on his two malos, the malo of sennit and the malo of pandanus. The double-wound coils of sennit round waist and abdomen served as protective armor for the vital organs against spear thrusts. There is no record of body painting or decoration.

Weapons were kept in the sleep house on the platform, laid across the tiebeams, or in the armory house (*wale lakau*). Each of the principal paternal lineages possessed its armory, a house of the *wale wakayawea* type. Some such houses were built on the boundary of the principal cemetery of the lineage; others were close to the principal god house of the lineage. In this house the men of the lineage and the sub-lineages stored their heavy spears and clubs, keeping at home only smaller weapons like fish-bone knives. The armories were not tapu; anyone might visit them at any time, and they were kept in good order by the attendants of the god house. The weapons were stored in these houses on platforms, leaving the ground space clear for use by overflow mourners from the mourning houses when many people of the lineage stayed at the cemetery during a period of mourning. In case of alarm, a man girded on his malo at home, picked up his smaller weapons, and ran to the armory of his lineage to select suitable spears and clubs. He might, in dire need, steal a weapon from an armory not belonging to his own lineage, provided he could gain access to it.

Immediately following a war alarm or the sighting of foreign vessels offshore, the priests of the lineage went to the religious structure (*awanga ya*) of the lineage, tied coconut leaves to the stone of the god, and prayed for success in the coming meeting. Where the men of Wale supported the high chief of the island against a group bent on unlawful ends, the chief went to the sacred enclosure to pray to the goddess Tasa, who,

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by her powers, invariably so affected the opposing warriors that they became crazed and, in this condition, easy to kill. The story of Kuluea and Uyo (1) is instructive in this regard as showing the power of Tuna. Even so, Pukapukan belief holds firmly that he whose quarrel is just is thrice armed; the eight men of Ngake in the fighting at Waietoa (p. 389) were therefore entirely unharmed or, if injured, healed quickly at the end of a bloody day of battle.

When meeting strangers, as when Te Nana met Te Palo in Yayake, or when meeting foreign vessels, the Pukapukans always challenged by throwing a coconut-leaf midrib, called *kaleva manu* (*kaleva* bird) or *yiliyili* (question). If the strangers kept the missile after it had been thrown at them, this was a sign they came in peace. If they returned it, this was a sign that their intentions were hostile. If the first leaf was returned, two more leaves were thrown before the return of the missile was taken as a definite sign of warfare. The war cry of the people of Pukapuka was: "Manava Pukapuka . . . i . . a!" (Stomach of Pukapuka . . . i . . . a!)

A definite form of organization was worked out for meeting foreign vessels or canoes:

The two paternal lineages, Yangalipuke and Yalongo, united to form the *wata kowa* (advance guard that went first to the foreign canoes). The two lineages, Muliwutu and i Tua, united as the *wai taina* (reserve or supporting division). The lineages Matanga, Yamuunga and Yayi, were together the *muli kowa* (home division). The captain of the advance canoe of the *wata kowa* carried with him the coconut *yiliyili* (question). As his canoes came up to the strangers, he stood up and hurled the "question". It was arranged before the launching of the canoes which canoe would go first, and the privilege of throwing the *yiliyili* (also the position of danger as hostile canoes would attack the leading canoe first) was shared in rotation among the lineages comprising the advance guard. The supporting division followed behind the advance canoes ready to give support if the *yiliyili* was returned. The home division remained on shore to guard the women, children, and the land, should the strangers attempt to make a forced landing. All the men on canoes or land were armed with weapons. Signals from the canoes to the shore were made by the flashing of wet paddles in the sun.

As soon as a strange vessel was sighted, the women went off to the talo beds and came back quickly to prepare a hasty talo meal for the men. (Tuiva could not himself set out to fight, even though he knew his enemies were looking for him, without first sending his wife to the talo beds to get talo to make a food complement for the fish which he was himself going to catch.) After a quick meal, the men girded on their malos and took up their weapons. The priests prayed on the sacred enclosure for the protection of the gods. The canoes were launched, and the advance and reserve groups paddled to meet the strangers. The home group lined up on the beach and organized for resistance.

No fortifications, either of stone or wood, were used by the Pukapukans. In land warfare it was customary for each warrior (*toa*) to be accompanied by one or more younger men who carried his spare weapons, much in the same way as knights were attended by squires. This is well brought out in the story of Tuiva.